



Task-based language teaching online: A guide for teachers

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Abstract

Technology-mediated task-based language teaching is the merger between technology and task-based language teaching (TBLT; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014) and is arguably now an imperative for language education. As language classrooms are being redefined, training for how to set learners up to successfully do tasks online must be part of teachers' professional development. However, while multiple resources have been written on tasks, technology, and task-based language courses online (e.g., Chapelle, 2014; Doughty & Long, 2003; González-Lloret, 2016; Nielson, González-Lloret, & Pinckney, 2009; Thomas & Reinders, 2012), teacher training for this purpose has largely been ignored. To date, no methodological guide for how to do TBLT via online video interactive tutorials has been published for teachers. In this article, we address this need by proposing a methodology framework for doing TBLT online. We begin with a brief review of TBLT fundamentals and demonstrate how to adapt the Willis (1996, 2012) task-based methodology framework for synchronous, online video-based interaction. We describe the framework and show examples of how to apply it while fostering socialization and community building (Hampel & Stickler, 2005). We also discuss unique challenges that teachers face when doing TBLT online, and propose solutions for how these can be overcome to maximize language learning.

Keywords: Task-Based Learning and Teaching, Teacher Education, Distance Learning and Teaching, Computer-Mediated Communication

Language(s) Learned in this Study: Spanish

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Introduction

Implementing task-based methodology during real-time, video-based interaction is fundamentally different from traditional, face-to-face interaction. Teachers have to manage both interaction and learner attention in an electronic platform that disperses learners' attention more easily than traditional classrooms (e.g., Stickler & Shi, 2015). Socialization and community building—fundamental to engagement with a language and language learning—are not accomplished in the same way as they are in traditional classrooms, so teachers must foster these components differently (see Baralt, Gurzynski-Weiss, & Kim, 2016; Hampel & Stickler, 2005). Resultantly, online language teaching can be much more cognitively demanding on teachers than face-to-face teaching (Godev, 2014; Tomei, 2006; Worley & Tesdell, 2009).

This article is a guide for teachers on how to do task-based language teaching (TBLT) online. To begin, we provide a brief review of TBLT fundamentals for teachers. We then explain how we have adapted the Willis (1996, 2012) task-based methodology framework to train teachers how to teach via synchronous, video-based interaction and how to promote socialization online. Examples from real online sessions are provided.

A Review of TBLT Fundamentals

TBLT

TBLT is a pedagogical framework for the theory and teaching of second or foreign languages (IATBLT, n.d.). TBLT means teaching with, learning with, and assessing with tasks—not isolated grammar forms—in order to promote functionality in the language. As described in detail by Long (2015), a fully task-based course must first begin with a needs analysis in order to identify learners' authentic needs with the language. From this needs analysis, target tasks are identified and classified into target task types. Pedagogical tasks are then designed. The next step is to sequence the pedagogic tasks from cognitively simple to cognitively complex in a syllabus. Materials (such as building block tasks) are designed, and the teacher plans the methodology for implementing tasks. Task-based assessment that is performance-based and criterion-referenced, with the assessment *exit tasks* also stemming from the original needs analysis, is also fundamental to TBLT. The final step of a full task-based course should also involve evaluation on a program-wide scale (for details and examples, see González-Lloret, 2016; González-Lloret & Nielson, 2015; Long, 2005, 2015; McDonough & Chaitmongkol, 2007; Nielson, Masters, Rhoades, & Freynik, 2009; Serafini & Torres, 2015).

Tasks

According to Ellis (2009b), a language-teaching activity must meet four criteria in order to count as a task. The task must

- have a primary focus on meaning,
- have a gap (e.g., the learner has to do something in order to complete the task),
- require that learners rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic), and
- have an outcome (e.g., something to show for having successfully performed the task, not just a display of language; see Ellis, 2009b, p. 223).

Let us consider an example. The activity in [Figure 1](#) is a task because it is focused on meaning. Learners have to read an excerpt from a real interview and derive their own meaning from it to be able to answer the comprehension questions. There is a gap in that learners must read the interview excerpt in order to do the task. Learners also have to rely on their own linguistic resources to do the task (they are not regurgitating what the teacher says). Finally, there is a clear outcome: learners' written out answers to the two questions that serve as proof for having done the task and that they can show their teacher and classmates.

Task

Read the interview excerpt below. Then, work with your partner to write answers to the two questions below. Be prepared to report your answers to the class.

Interview with Spanish Economy Minister

Luis de Guindos

Luis de Guindos is the current Minister of Economy and Competitiveness of Spain. Many consider him a key player in helping Spain achieve an economic recovery after the European debt crisis (2009-2014). In an interview with CNBC's Julia Chatterly, he discusses aspects of Spain's economy.

Q. Spain is set to be the fastest growing country of the 4 biggest Eurozone countries this year. Is Spain the authentic poster child for the recovery and reform in the Eurozone?

A: I think that Spain sets an example for the Eurozone. We have implemented important reforms, for instance, the financial sector in the liberal market. We have also reduced our public deficit and now we are outpacing the majority of our peers in the Eurozone. This year, the growth rate of Spain is going to exceed 3%. In fact, our prediction is that it may even be 3.3%. Employment creation is going to be quite rapid as well. This year, the Spanish economy will create close to 600,000 new jobs. This is outstanding, especially because we have such a high unemployment rate. At the same time, we are quite a competitive economy and the banking industries are in an entirely different situation than they were only 3 to 4 years ago. So in the turnaround the Spanish economy has been quite remarkable.

Source: Adapted from CNBC interview with Julia Chatterley, December 2, 2015

<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/12/02/cnbc-transcript-interview-with-spanish-economy-minister-louis-de-guindos.html>

1. Who is being interviewed? What is his overall purpose?

2. Do you think he answers the interviewer's question?

Figure 1. Sample task titled Spain's economic recovery.

Task-Based Methodology

Just as important as tasks, task-based methodology is the way in which teachers implement tasks, set learners up to perform the tasks successfully, and manage learners' attention to form-meaning connections (Samuda, 2001). There are three models for task-based methodology (i.e., Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Willis, 1996, 2012).¹ While somewhat different in scope, these models are similar in the way they encourage teachers to reflect on different methodological options around and during tasks in order to maximize learners' task performance and learning. In this article, we adopt the Willis (1996, 2012) task-based framework, seen below in [Figure 2](#).

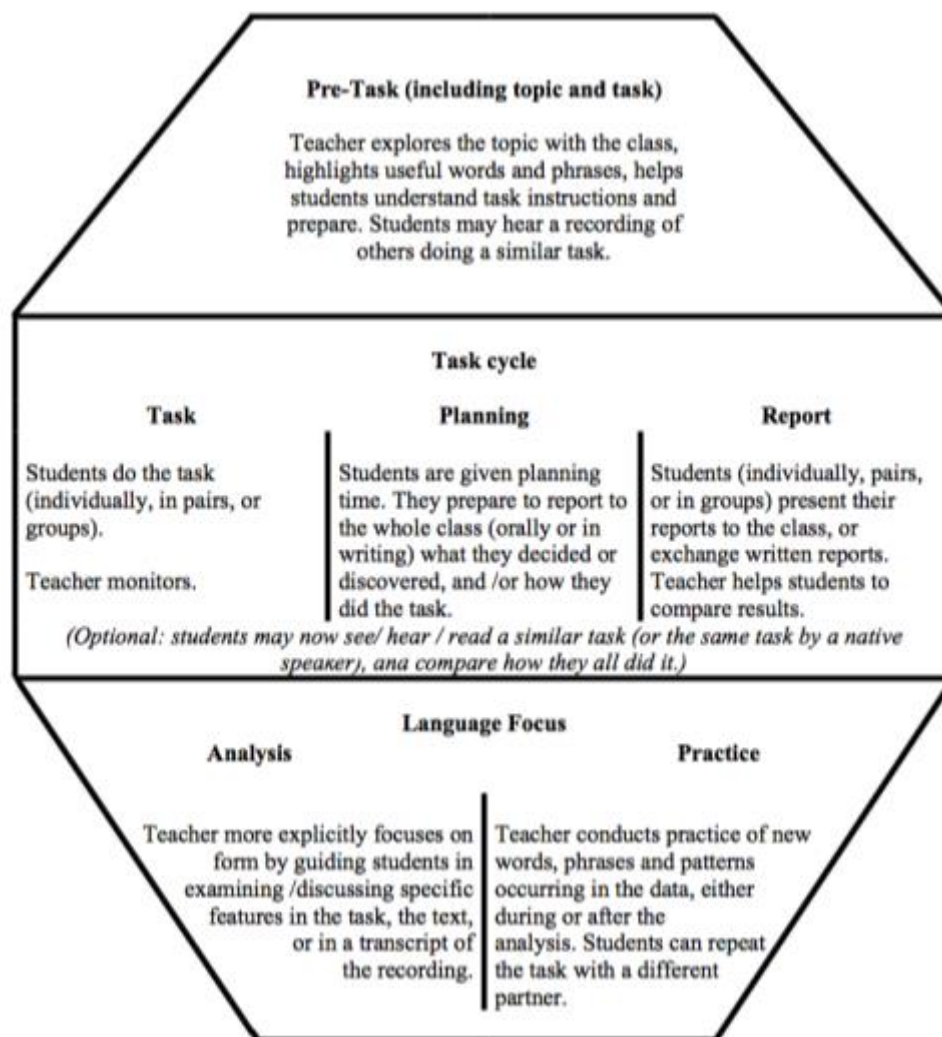


Figure 2. The task-based learning framework (modified from Willis, 1996, 2012). Reprinted with permission from Jane Willis. Please see Willis' [online e-book](#). For task-based learning resources and free task-based lesson plans, see [Willis-ELT](#).

Willis (1996, 2012) proposes three phases for teachers to plan for around a task: the *pre-task* phase, the *task cycle*, and the *language focus*. In the pre-task phase, the teacher introduces the topic and does activities to help learners activate prior knowledge or learn new useful words and phrases. The teacher ensures that learners understand the instructions and what they will have to show as their task outcome in the report stage. Next, the teacher transitions to the task cycle. The task cycle is comprised of three components: the *task* itself, *planning time*, and the *report*. During the task, learners perform the task individually, in pairs, or in groups, while the teacher acts as a monitor and provides support. During planning time, the teacher optionally gives learners time to prepare for the report. She or he also acts as a language advisor (Willis, 1996).² during the report, learners demonstrate their task outcome. The teacher acts as chairperson, for example, calling on who will go next and gives feedback on content and form. Finally, the teacher transitions to the language focus, comprised of the analysis and practice. In the analysis, the teacher does a post-task explicit focus on form by bringing words, phrases, and forms to learners' attention. During the practice, the teacher leads students in practicing forms reviewed during the analysis (e.g., memory challenges, dictations, drills). The teacher can also have students repeat the task as a form of practice.

As the reader can see, task-based methodology is not just doing a single task. Task-based methodology

encompasses all of the psycholinguistically-supported activities (be they discussions on learners' prior experiences, building block tasks, analyses, practices, etc.) that the teacher does around a task to maximize learners' performance of that task.

Let us now consider an example of how this methodological framework is planned for and applied to the task presented in Figure 1. In Figure 3, we see a teacher's methodological plan using the Willis (1996, 2012) task-based framework for the implementation of the task.

Pre-task

1. Ask the class if they can tell you what they know about the current economic situation in Spain. Write their contributions on one side of the board.
2. Let the class know that they will be reading the text of part of an interview done last month with Spain's Minister of Economy. Does anyone know who he is? His name is Luis de Guindos. The text they will read has lots of useful vocabulary and specialist phrases.
3. Before beginning, ask which of these six phrases are likely to appear in the text of the interview. Ask the class to discuss what each phrase means in pairs. Then, ask if anyone can explain what they mean:

<i>structural shift</i>	<i>extra funding for security</i>	<i>public deficit</i>
<i>50% youth unemployment</i>	<i>creating temporary jobs</i>	<i>out of the woods</i>

Task cycle

Task

Give handout to students. Which of the above phrases is in the text? (Discuss). Go over instructions with students and ensure they understand what their task outcome will be. Ask what "poster child" means. Be sure that they know that they will be reporting their answers to the rest of the class.

Students do the task.

Planning and report

Plan. Each pair plans their responses to give to the class.

Report. All pairs (or, if time is limited, a few randomly-selected pairs) share their answers with the class. Guide the class in discussing whether all students agree so far, and if they don't, to discuss further.

Language focus

Analysis

1. Focus on forms by asking students to do the following in pairs:

1. Phrases implying economic growth

Find two phrases (or whole sentences) in the right-hand column of your task text that imply that Spain's economy is recovering. Which phrases demonstrate growth? (Give this example: "the Spanish economy will create close to 600,000 new jobs") (Give students time to do this).

Let's look at some of the lexical phrases here, common to economic texts:

Spanish economy
public deficit
the majority ... of our peers
growth rate
employment creation

Look at these last two. These are very common noun phrases that are composed of two nouns.

2. Discussion on specialist / topic lexis: structure of noun phrases

Ask students what these phrases have in common structurally:

inflation rate, job market, real estate industry, trade deficit, money supply

(They are all made up of two or more nouns)

Practice

1. Expressions with numbers: memory challenge game

Tell students to turn their handouts over and put down their pens. Write these numbers on the board:

3, 3.3, 600,000, “3 to 4”

Can they remember the whole phrases that they were in?

Give them one minute to read the text again (no pens and no writing!). After one minute, turn text over. THEN -- ask students to pick up their pens and write down the phrases from memory (should be fun).

Have students check with their partner to see if she/he has the same as them.

Ask volunteers to read the chunks of language that they remembered out loud to the class.

As a class, compare how close students' attempt were to the actual text. Discuss what is missing.

2. Task Repetition

In pairs but with a different partner, ask the class to once again report to each other the same question you began with: What do you think of the current economic situation in Spain? (Tell them that you will call on two volunteers at random to come up in front of the class and report! This should be lively and fun).

Call on a few volunteers at random to tell the class what they know about the Spanish economy at present.

3. Reflect

As a class, reflect on (1) how their ability to report on Spain's economic situation has improved, and (2) new language that they learned.

Figure 3. Sample task-based methodology plan.

Following the Willis (1996, 2012) model, this methodological plan has a pre-task phase, a task cycle (with the task, planning time, and report components), and a language focus (with the analysis and the practice components). In the pre-task phase, the teacher opens up the task topic semantically. In the task cycle, the learners do the task, are given planning time, and then report what their answers are to the class. In the language focus, the teacher does an explicit focus on form by discussing phrases about economic growth, as well as an explicit explanation of noun phrases (the analysis). For the practice, the teacher has the students do a memory challenge, followed by a modified repetition of the task and then a reflection.

TBLT Methodological Principles

Teachers should know that TBLT is grounded in theory, education philosophy, and psycholinguistics research (Long, 2015); yet, it is not one-size-fits-all. There are various interpretations of TBLT across the globe. To account for suggestions based on theory and research, as well as the infinite ways to *realize* these suggestions in the classroom in accordance with teachers' own contexts, Doughty and Long (Doughty & Long, 2003; Long, 2015) propose thinking about how we teach in terms of *methodological principles* (MPs) and *pedagogic procedures*. MPs are the *what*—that is, what we should do to maximize language learning. They are the design features—based on theory and research—that inform our course, materials, and methodological decisions.

Pedagogic procedures are the *how*—that is, how we implement MPs. Options for pedagogic procedures are infinite and are entirely up to the person who knows his or her learners best: the teacher. For example, MP6, focus on form, might be realized as a recast or as an explicit correction, depending on the teacher's choice, the task, what the teacher knows about the learner to whom the feedback is directed, and so forth. Teachers should familiarize themselves with the MPs of Doughty and Long (2003), in order to guide the pedagogic procedures they choose, and know that these apply to both traditional and online language classes. Thinking

about teaching in terms of MPs and pedagogic procedures is a helpful and consistent way for teachers to design tasks, create lesson plans, and reflect on their pedagogy. The 10 MPs by Doughty and Long, as well as examples of pedagogic principles for them, are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1. *The 10 MPs by Doughty and Long with Pedagogic Procedure Examples*

MP	Description and Examples
MP1	Use tasks. (Remember the four task characteristics of Ellis, 2003: be meaning-focused, have a gap, require learners to use their own resources, and have a tangible outcome.)
MP2	Promote learning by doing. (Learners must do the task themselves. Teachers facilitate the process, set them up for task performance, and help learners to notice.)
MP3	Elaborate input, don't simplify! (For excellent examples, see Long, 2015, pp. 250–255.)
MP4	Provide rich input. (Bring in rich, real examples of language. For example, you can invite a guest speaker to class, show videos from the Internet, or share a section of a text in class.)
MP5	Encourage inductive chunk learning. (Chunks are groups of words that go together such as fixed collocations, lexical phrases, idioms, and certain structures. Examples are <i>You know what I mean?</i> in English or <i>No hay de qué</i> in Spanish.)
MP6	Focus on form. (This means we as teachers help learners to notice. This can be done implicitly, explicitly (e.g., stopping to teach grammar), and even through the design of a task.)
MP7	Provide negative feedback. (Correct learners' errors! For a review, see Ellis, 2009a.)
MP8	Respect learner-internal syllabuses and developmental processes. (For example, it is alright if your learner still makes a grammatical gender error five weeks after learning about the form. Emerging <i>interlanguage deviations</i> are normal. Reflect on the pedagogic principles for MP6 and MP7. For another example, see research on the order of acquisition of certain forms, such as English question formation. This research informs how we should sequence tasks in a syllabus.)
MP9	Promote cooperative or collaborative learning. (Get learners to work together! Have variety in your interactant set-up, e.g., pair-work or group-work.)
MP10	Individualize instruction. (Tasks and teaching should be catered to our learners' abilities, affective differences, needs, and interests.)

Note. Summarized and modified from Doughty and Long (2003, p. 52) as well as from Long (2015).

TBLT Online

A challenge for teachers is that tasks and task-based methodology do not work in the same way online that they do in traditional, face-to-face classrooms. As argued by Nielson, et al. (2009), language courses cannot just be a “translation of an equivalent face-to-face course” (p. 5). While not much research has been done on video-based interaction and TBLT, what we do know is the following: (a) tasks that work well in person do not always work well online (Baralt, 2013, 2014); (b) a significant amount of learners' attention is devoted to social and technical features when interacting online, and this can cause mismatches between teachers' and learners' expectations (Stickler & Shi, 2013; 2015); (c) socializing and the formation of trust and friendship is essential for language learning, and these can be more challenging for the teacher to promote online (Baralt et al., 2016; Compton, 2009; Gleason, 2013; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Stickler & Shi, 2015); (d) learners may feel more self-conscious in video-based interaction (Coverdale-Jones, 2000); and (e) teachers have to employ additional tools online in order to successfully scaffold learners' interaction, attention, and knowledge construction, which can require extra cognitive effort on behalf of the teacher (Gleason, 2013). Incipient research also shows that learners prioritize avoiding loss of face over task completion in video-based interaction, which can negatively affect successful negotiation of meaning

(Van der Zwaard & Bannink, 2014).

These challenges aside, offering online classes is a good thing. Online classes give language learning opportunities to people that otherwise would not be able to study a language, such as those with geographic limitations. Plus, technology-delivered tasks can help students develop technology skills outside of the language classroom, thereby promoting essential web literacy skills (Chapelle, 2014; Chapelle & Hegelheimer, 2004; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). In fact, some features of online language teaching platforms may even enhance the language learning process, such as more noticing of corrective feedback (e.g., Baralt, 2013; Gleason, 2013; Gurzynski-Weiss & Baralt, 2015; Sykes, 2005; Thomas & Reinders, 2012; Thorne, 2008; see also Loewen & Wolff, 2016).

How to Do TBLT via Online Interactive Tutorials

Now that we have reviewed key fundamentals of TBLT, we demonstrate how to adapt Willis's (1996, 2012) original framework for doing TBLT online via video-based interaction. To apply it online, the report stage of the task cycle as well as the analysis stage of the language focus are both done in a video-based online meeting; all of the other components are done individually by the learner at home. Our proposed methodological framework for how to do TBLT via video-based interaction is seen below in [Figure 4](#), with an explanation to follow.

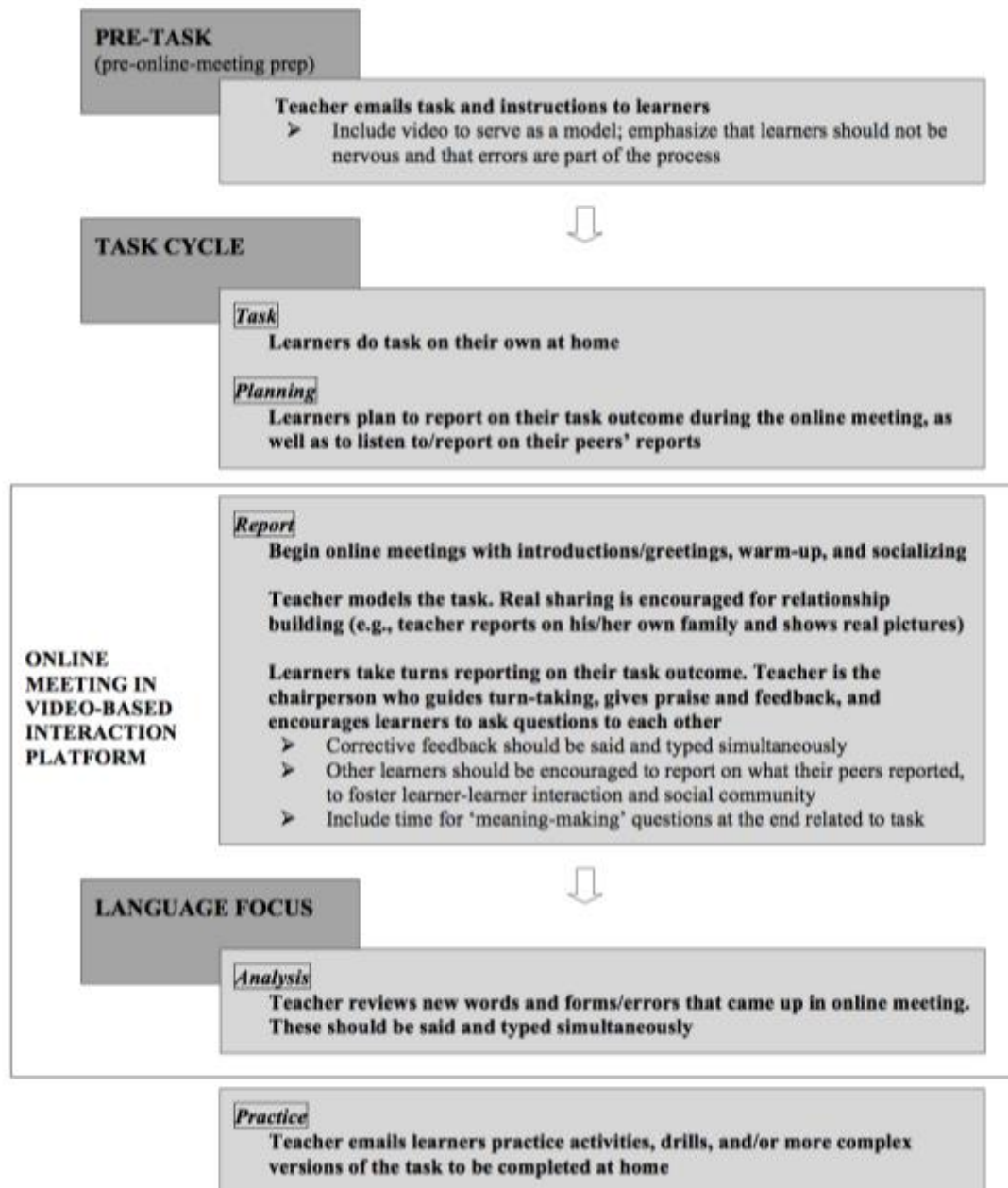


Figure 4. A framework for doing TBLT via online video tutorials (adapted from Willis, 1996, 2012).

The Pre-Task Phase

Essential to doing TBLT via online video interactive tutorials is preparation prior to the online meeting. This is done in the pre-task phase. Two actions that will help the teacher significantly in preparing learners in this phase is to send a video and detailed task instructions. Sending learners a video is an ideal way to provide learners with a model before meeting with them online. Not only is this psycholinguistically justified (the teacher models the task), it is a key step in initiating relationship building because the teacher also models sharing about his or her own life. In addition, a video is a means by which the teacher can encourage and motivate learners. Videos are simple to make with cell phones and can be uploaded to YouTube. To serve as an example, here is a [video](#) that we have made for our learners for this purpose.

Fundamental as well for the pre-task phase are detailed task instructions. The instructions should also include information about the technical aspects of the online meeting platform. The teacher lets the learners know what task they are to do and what their task outcome is to show for having successfully done it. The teacher also lets learners know what the goals are, what they can do to prepare, and provides *language focus* information. In Figure 5, we provide an example of task instructions that the teacher can email learners before meeting online, to include logistics and connectivity information.



2nd ORAL SESSION: SPANISH 1130

GOALS

- Describe our family
- Listen to others describe their families, and be able to summarize what we heard
- Practice our speaking skills in Spanish
- Review new vocabulary from Chapter 2
- Get to know our classmates better
- Lose our fear of talking in another language

TASKS: Describe our family and report on our classmates' descriptions of their families

In our small groups online, each student will do the following during the task:

Activity 1. (2 minutes)

- a) Think about a member of your family or about a friend (friends can count as family too!).
- b) Describe this person.
- c) Show a picture of this person after your description.

Assignment (what you need to do before our online meeting): Write a brief paragraph describing this person. Some 'chunks' of language to help you are:

- Mi (hermano, hermana, padre, madre, novio, novia, primo, prima, compañero o compañera de cuarto, etc...) es..... (pag. 71 y 73)
- Tiene ... (años)
- No le gusta..... (pag. 76-77)
- Le gusta.....(pag.76-77)
- Have a photo ready to share

You can re-watch my video to see an example of how I describe my family. Here is **another example in writing for you:**

Mis hijos tienen 16 y 14 años. Pablo es alto, moreno, simpático, estudioso y deportista. Le gusta escuchar música, tocar el oboe y jugar a balonmano. Su hermano, Javier, es moreno, sus ojos son marrones, es divertido, simpático estudioso y alegre. Le gusta la música electrónica y juega a balonmano. Ellos viven en España.

Activity 2. (2 minutes)

- a) Listen to your classmate as he or she describes their family member or friend.
- b) Take notes about the descriptions that you hear.
- c) Be prepared to tell the group what you just heard (and be ready -- I will call on you at any time to report back on what you heard!). You can use the notes you took to help you.

Here is an example:

Sus hijos tienen 16 y 14 años, viven en España. A sus hijos les gusta escuchar música, jugar a balonmano. Su hijo Pablo es alto, moreno y simpático. Su hijo Javier es divertido, alegre y estudioso.

Be prepared to answer questions that I will ask you, and also to ask your classmates questions. (Don't worry- I will help you).

Language Focus:

New language to notice, think and talk about:

- Use of *ser*
- Use of possessive adjectives
- Use of *gustar* and *no gustar*
- Gender agreement between adjectives and nouns in Spanish



PLEASE, DON'T FORGET:

We will be using a great communication tool to meet, talk, and do our task together online: Adobe Connect. You can connect from wherever you want; however, there are some **technical recommendations** to be followed in order to ensure smooth communication.

1. You **MUST have a headset** (headphones and mic). Earphones will not work. Even if your computer has a built-in mic, you will need to buy a headset, no exceptions.
2. Students **cannot use Google Chrome**. Please use Explorer or Firefox.
3. If possible, try to **connect by landline**. Wifi is not stable and can lead to technical problems.
4. Before you attend the sessions, please **run the Adobe Connect test** located on Blackboard.
5. **Come prepared to the sessions** by studying the material to be covered. (**Preliminar and Chapter 1**). I will let you know a week prior to our online meeting what you need to focus on. We only have 30 minutes, so we need to get the most out of it.

IMPORTANT: Students will **get 10 points for every oral session** if they are on time, come technically prepared, and have studied the material by preparing the activities assigned by me. **Grammar errors will not be penalized. This is about you being able to do a real task in the Spanish language so that you can take these new skills out to the real world here in Miami. Remember, I will facilitate the process! I am here to help you and look forward to seeing all of the tasks that you will accomplish in class.**

Figure 5. Sample task instructions before online meeting.

The Task Cycle

As the reader knows, the three components of the task cycle are the task, planning, and report. To adapt the Willis (1996, 2012) model for online video-based interactive tutorials, the task and planning are done by the learner first at home (e.g., describe your family via a written paragraph, review vocabulary, prepare to share this information, etc.). Only the report is done in the online meeting. Online meetings for the report stage work best with one to four learners (no more than six), plus the teacher. This number is based on teacher feedback in our local context at Florida International University, as well as the platform space needed for the teacher to maximize its features (e.g., in the Adobe® Connect™ platform, there is video and chat space, among other features). As indicated in the framework, the teacher should always begin online video sessions with greetings and a warm-up. The teacher welcomes the class, introduce himself or herself, and then asks learners to do the same. The teacher can also remind learners about the goals of the online meeting, how it will be organized, and what tasks they will accomplish. Next, the teacher begins by modeling the task (e.g., reporting to learners what his or her own family is like). He or she then calls on learners to do the same. During this time, the teacher is the chairperson. This means that he or she models, guides, encourages, scaffolds, and leads the learners in turn-taking. He or she asks questions about learners' lives and provides feedback and praise.

When errors are made, it is recommended that the teacher provide corrective feedback dually; that is, he or she says it aloud in the video and also writes it down via the chat or writing spaces available in the video-meeting platform. Not only does this provide learners with dual coding (Paivio, 1986), it accounts for the delay that can be experienced in video-based online interaction.

Let us now see an example with [this video](#) (a screen shot from which is provided in [Figure 6](#) below). [Figure 6](#) shows the Adobe® Connect™ platform in which the teacher guides two students in performing the task.

In the video, the teacher has shared about his family, and both learners, Bronte and Peter, have done so as well. The teacher asks Peter to summarize what his classmate Bronte shared about her family. Peter produces an error: **no le gusta conversadora*. The teacher does a focus on form by orally providing the learner with a correction and he types it out as well. Peter incorporates the correct form into his modified output. (Note that there is a slight time lag during this episode, which is why dual focus on form is necessary.) The teacher praises the learner, and then asks Bronte if Peter's summary was accurate, thereby including her at the same time.



Figure 6. Example of an online platform for synchronous, video-based interaction.

Concluding the Report

After the report and any follow-up activities, the teacher should give time for meaning-making questions. This is an important opportunity to continue to get to know one another and to ask questions. In [this video](#), we show how a teacher does this. The teacher has invited Peter to ask questions with no prior planning. The timing of meaning-making questions after the report is psycholinguistically ideal because learners have just completed a task. It is their opportunity to make their own meaning in the language (e.g., produce output, test hypotheses about how the language works, see what they know) in a way that is more spontaneous. This is a good way to stretch their interlanguage and challenge them.

The Language Focus

The final component of the framework is the language focus, comprised of the analysis and the practice. In video-based interaction, the analysis is done during the online meeting right after the report, while the practice is done by learners afterwards and on their own time. The analysis is the time to explicitly bring learners' attention to forms that arise *from their own production* during the report. The teacher should review new words, chunks of language, and any grammar that comes up during the online meeting. The analysis does not have to be long, and can be as simple as saying the following:

"Great job guys, you now can do [task] in Spanish! I want to go over a few chunks of language, as well as grammar, that came up during our meeting together today ... We also learned how to say someone's age in Spanish. Which verb do we use again? Peter, can you tell us the age of your cousins?"

If timing permits, the teacher can also use this analysis time and space to review pronunciation and cultural or dialectal norms. Just as with any corrective feedback during the report, the teacher should say and type the forms to which he or she gives attention in the analysis. Finally, the teacher concludes the online meeting by summarizing what the learners have accomplished, reviewing what their post-task practice is, and

mentioning house-keeping items such as upcoming homework and logistics for the next meeting.

The practice component of the language focus is done at home and is a follow up to the task. It should serve to highlight further any forms that came up during the online meeting. The teacher can ask learners to repeat the task (either the same task or a slightly more complex task). Learners can do so monologically or go out and interview someone in their community, record it, and transcribe the interview. The teacher can also give learners more grammar-focused exercises to proceduralize their new, declarative knowledge (DeKeyser, 1998).

Final Considerations for Online Video-Based Interaction

There are some unique challenges that teachers face when doing TBLT methodology online in video-based interaction. These include fatigue, connectivity problems, use of the L1, nonstudents unexpectedly attending the online meeting, and how to foster a sense of community online. Based on our experience, our advice can be summarized in four key points. First, teachers should know that online teaching often involves doing many things all at the same time (e.g., guiding a conversation between learners while simultaneously typing privately to another learner to solve a technical problem). It is normal to feel worn out afterwards. Teachers should plan ahead and include breaks in between sessions. Second, teachers should make sure they have a good Internet connection (we suggest hardwire whenever possible). This will facilitate their job significantly. Third, teachers should try to stay in the target language as much as they can. While the L1 can serve as a mediation tool and a resource to scaffold second language production (Ellis & Shintani, 2014), it is vital that learners receive maximum input and output production opportunities in the target language. Last, language learning online must be seen as building a sense of community and as a safe space for learners to share about themselves in the target language. The teacher can foster socialization via task design, the way he or she scaffolds turn-taking, and the embracing of the unexpected. Real tasks, based off of a needs analysis in order to gauge learners' authentic needs with the language, are a critical starting point to do this. Learners' having to do real tasks that are pertinent to their lives and local contexts, and then listening and sharing about each other's perspectives, facilitates a sense of community. For example, in our context, teachers can ask learners to do tasks such as *Describe your favorite places in Miami*, rather than *Describe the favorite places of the character in your textbook on page X*. Learners also begin to reciprocate the teacher's praise with each other after they attempt to retell or compare other classmates' family reports. An example of how a teacher can do this is provided in [this video](#). Here, the teacher has asked Bronte to report on what Peter just said about his own family. Observe how the teacher scaffolds and guides the interaction, so that eventually, the interaction ends up being between Bronte and Peter. Peter is just as vested as Bronte while she is reporting, because the topic is about his own family!

We reiterate that having a real task to do, based off of learners' authentic needs and lives, gives them the capacity to feel a sense of community. It also helps to use humor and embrace the unexpected in the online meetings. For example, a learner in our context once had to care for his baby at the same time as the online meeting. The teacher asked him to introduce the baby to the group (all in the target language). The learner did so, and the baby "attended" the meeting as well. Every online meeting after that, the class asked him about his daughter. Community building online such as this sets the necessary stage for successful and purposeful language learning.

Conclusion

Our goal with this article is to contribute to training materials for teachers to teach languages online. In this manuscript, we have reviewed fundamentals of TBLT, to include a description of tasks, task-based methodology, and MPs, as well as pedagogic procedures for teaching. We demonstrate how teachers can adapt Willis's (1996, 2012) TBLT methodology framework for teaching online with the pre-task, task cycle, and language focus, and how they can be the chairperson and facilitator. Imperative to online language learning is socialization and community building, and we have given examples of how we have done so.

Doing TBLT via video-based interaction does have unique challenges, but these can be overcome in order to foster language learning in this mode. We call for more work on methodology training materials and, specifically, for real examples to support teachers in carrying out technology-mediated TBLT.

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Notes

1. The Ellis (2003) model is the simplest and most adaptable for teachers, and involves three optional phases: the *pre-task phase*, the *during-task phase*, and the *post-task phase*. The Willis (1996, 2012) task-based framework is similar in scope, but it is more detailed and has deliberately-included components that both theory and research argue support second language acquisition: the *pre-task phase*, the *task cycle* (with *task*, *planning time*, and *report*), and the *language focus* (which is comprised of an *analysis* and then a *practice*). In the Willis model, explicit grammar teaching can only take place in the analysis component of the language focus (i.e., after the task). While Ellis (2003) also suggests that grammar teaching is best reserved for the post-task phase, in his model, grammar teaching as a means of focus on form can take place in any of the phases. Finally, the Nunan (2004) task-based framework involves six steps for teachers to follow in a deliberate attempt to simulate receptive to productive processing. These are (1) schema building, (2) controlled practice, (3) authentic listening, (4) focus on linguistic elements, (5) providing freer practice, and (6) doing a fully communicative task. Of these three models, Willis' (1996, 2012) task-based framework is the strongest version of TBLT.
2. While Willis (1996, 2012) deliberately proposes a planning time before learners formally report, note that in her framework, planning time may also occur before the task itself.

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